January, 2011

We are excited to invite you to submit a team project for the “Making Good Food Work” conference.

This coming April 19-21, more than 200 entrepreneurs, food industry professionals, non-profit practitioners, researchers, and policymakers will convene in Detroit to build strategies for more effective and equitable distribution of local and regional food. The conference will be supported by the USDA’s Agriculture and Food Research Initiative and additional sponsors. Over 20 organizations from across the U.S. have indicated their support for and intent to participate in the conference.

The event will center around development of real-world projects led by participants from around the country. Over the course of three days, participants will form and work in entrepreneurial teams to develop actual businesses, programs, and research projects that strengthen local food systems by tackling challenges of food distribution logistics, infrastructure, and transportation in their community.

Possible projects could include but are not limited to:

- Researching and outlining a business plan, including start-up costs, for a mobile grocery unit;
- Developing a strategic plan to increase sales from urban farmers to local restaurants;
- Laying the groundwork for a multi-state food distribution research proposal;
- Writing a proposal for a feasibility study for a regional aggregation facility; or
- Developing food distribution plans for an area identified as a “food desert”

In addition to ten to fifteen “entrepreneurial” teams working to develop projects, we will also invite five to ten “issue-based” teams that are not tied to a specific project or business, but will draw together experts and practitioners to discuss the overarching policy issues and boundary conditions associated with specific topics in alternative distribution which could include food hub development, processing and aggregation, mobile grocery stores, or specific challenges for rural distribution.

Teams will have the opportunity to draw on the experience and skills of team members from across the nation as well as experts in subjects like transportation, supply chain management, training and education for producers, marketing, business development, and alternative finance. On Day Three, teams will present on their progress and receive feedback from other attendees. Some awards may be given for continuing work on top projects.

**We are soliciting applications from individuals and organizations to lead teams and hope you will consider submitting your new or existing project or issue idea.**

To be considered, please decide whether you would like to lead an issue-based team or a project-based team, then complete and return an electronic copy of the appropriate form to Jess Daniel by February 4, 2011. If you have questions or need more information, please don’t hesitate to contact Jess Daniel at 714-388-4489 or by email at jessd@msu.edu.

Sincerely,
The Making Good Food Work Organizing Team
Making Good Food Work
National Conference on Local and Regional Food Distribution
April 19-21, 2011 • Detroit, MI

Team Leader Application – Project-Based Teams

Project-based teams will work to develop actual businesses, programs, and research projects that address food distribution challenges in their community or region.

Please return an electronic copy of the application form in .doc or .pdf format to Jess Daniel by February 4, 2011. If you have questions or need more information, please don’t hesitate to contact Jess at 714-388-4489 or by email at jessd@msu.edu.

Project/Team Name:

URL (if applicable): Email address:
Full name: Organization:
City: State:

Project is initiated by:
☐ Researcher/academic ☐ Producer/producer cooperative
☐ Non-profit/government ☐ Third party entrepreneur
☐ Retail ☐ Wholesaler/distributor
☐ Other, please describe:

Primary markets you plan to serve (check all that apply):

☐ N/A Research project ☐ Wholesale distributors ☐ Direct-to-consumer
☐ Farm-to-school ☐ Supermarket ☐ Other, please explain:
☐ Farm-to-hospital ☐ Alternative retail
☐ Farm-to-institution ☐ Areas with inadequate food access
☐ Restaurants

Services you plan to supply (check all that apply):

☐ N/A not sure ☐ Pricing ☐ Distribution
☐ Production support ☐ Billing ☐ Marketing
☐ GAP/HACCP training ☐ Aggregation ☐ Wholesale marketing
☐ Season extension training ☐ Processing ☐ Direct-to-consumer marketing
☐ Quality/packing requirements training ☐ Washing ☐ Branding
☐ Logistics ☐ Packing ☐ Other
☐ Quality control ☐ Repacking

☐ Storage
Please address the following questions in two pages or less. Please be as specific as possible.

1) What are the goals of your project?
2) What stage of development is your project or business in?
3) Who are the key stakeholders? Which stakeholders will attend the conference?
4) What are the key opportunities and challenges your project addresses?
5) What type of resources or expert assistance do you need? How do you feel this conference will help move your project forward?
6) How will your project impact underserved communities? *Examples might be targeting under-represented populations of producers, or focusing on distribution to areas with low-access to fruits and vegetables.*
Making Good Food Work
National Conference on Local and Regional Food Distribution
April 19-21, 2011 ● Detroit, MI

Team Leader Application – Issue-based Teams

Issue-based teams will draw together practitioners, researchers, and policy-makers interested in discussing a particular alternative distribution model. The team may work to determine a set of common best practices, challenges, boundary conditions, and policy and research needs.

Please return an electronic copy of the application form in .doc or .pdf format to Jess Daniel by February 4, 2011. If you have questions or need more information, please don’t hesitate to contact Jess at 714-388-4489 or by email at jessd@msu.edu.

Full name: Email address: State:
City: Organization:

Examples of issues that an “issue-team” include, but are not limited to:

- Food hub infrastructure
- Green carts and mobile vending
- Aggregation in the urban context
- Retail models for rural areas
- Fruit and vegetable processing
- Volunteer-based aggregation and distribution
- Local/regional buying by large-scale distributors

Please address the following questions in two pages or less. Please be as specific as possible.

1) What issue do you plan to address in your group?
2) What outcome or outcomes do you expect from the team process? This could include identifying a set of shared policy priorities, creating a set of planning guidelines, or developing questions for future research.
3) How will these outcomes move the conversation forward on your issue?
4) What type of input will you need to achieve these outcomes? What kind of participants do you hope to attract to your group?
5) How will your project impact underserved communities? Examples might be targeting under-represented populations of producers, or focusing on distribution to areas with low-access to fruits and vegetables.
Frequently Asked Questions

1) **Does this project need to be a new idea?**
   No, we encourage you to submit existing business or project ideas. For existing projects, the conference will be a chance to consider new strategies or directions, get a fresh perspective on the program’s efficacy, or get access to specific expertise that will help improve existing operations.

2) **How will teams be formed?**
   For the most part, teams will form organically at the conference based on participants’ interests and expertise. We will post a summary of the selected projects on-line pre-conference. At the start of the event, pre-selected team leads will give a brief 3 minute “pitch” to all attendees explaining the nature of the project, their goals, and their needs. Afterwards, attendees will have time to self-organize. If you plan to lead a team around an existing project, we encourage you to invite other stakeholders and contributors to attend the conference and join your team.

3) **How many people will be on each team?**
   We expect around 8-10 people on each team. Each team may end up larger or smaller depending on the interest of participants.

4) **What will each team deliver at the end of the three days?**
   Deliverables will depend on the team and its goals. Teams might end up with a rough business plan, a funding proposal, or a strategic plan or they may simply come up with follow-up questions and a list of stakeholders to engage.

   Every team will give a short presentation on Day Three, outlining their progress over the weekend. Teams will also be expected to fill out and turn in a few short “check-in” worksheets through the course of the event, which will be posted online and will be available for participants and non-attendees after the conference.

5) **What expertise will be available to assist the teams?**
   We anticipate conference participation by researchers, educators, distributors, and policy-makers who are interested in food distribution issues. Once the projects have been selected, we will recruit experts who have particular interest in the topics.

6) **What, besides time for teams to work, will be included in the conference?**
   There will be interactive conference sessions focused on some of the key opportunities and challenges in food distribution as identified by conference planners.

7) **What are the overall goals of the conference?**
   - Academics, policy makers, entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs learn from experts and from one another to **develop plans for action**, a better sense of how their interests and work fit into the national context, and ideas of actions needed for developing regional and local food distribution that better serves disadvantaged communities.
• Proceedings inform policy-makers, funders, and advocates especially in the fields of public health, economic development, agriculture, and planning on avenues for supporting development of regional food distribution, especially serving disadvantaged communities, through training and education, infrastructure investment, or policy change.

• Conferees will come away with a plan to recreate the conference in their region in order to extend the impact of this conference towards the previous goals and to recognize the significance of regional differences.

8) What is the cost?
Conference registration costs $150 for early registration and $200 for late registration and covers participation, workshops and keynote speakers, some meals, and an optional field trip.